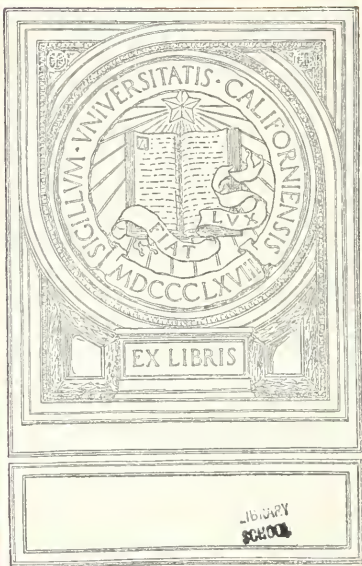


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agination

and

Children's

Reading

By

Grace Hazard Conkling

"If we once realize how children see things we can never  
patronize them again."

*G. H. C.*



The Hampshire Bookshop, Inc.  
Northampton, Mass.

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## IMAGINATION AND CHILDREN'S READING

*A Talk Given at the Hampshire Bookshop*

*Nov. 16, 1920*

What is it people lose when they grow up? Simplicity ✓ and insight. They get wise with so many little details called facts that they lose the broad view. It's like getting into a fog. If we once realize how children see things, we can never patronize them again. They see colors invisible to us, contours we have forgotten. I don't mean to be sentimental about children, I want to be just. ~~But~~ I do believe that beauty is often real to them when we cannot see it, because they have not yet had time to get tired of anything. They are not afraid to put incongruous things together. They adore the whimsical, the grotesque even. Being ignorant of science, philosophy, tradition, they have an unspoiled directness of observation and fearlessness of expression. They have sympathies and intuitions which only certain poets, among grown-ups, can share; ~~William Blake and Robert Burns, for example.~~ ✓ Periods and dates do not matter much to poets, nor to children. They do not care that Jason and Robin Hood never knew each other personally. Siegfried might have killed the dragon yesterday, and flung back his head in happy astonishment at understanding

what the birds were saying about him. The great stories of all time may be presented with success as so much realism. That is what they are to the child-mind. When the time has come for independent reading, when the child can travel through book after book without having to wait for the favorable mood or the leisure of any adult, it is of much importance that many books and good books be provided. Many because there should be possibility of choice, good, because first impressions persist. Even more important is that preparatory period when the child must still be read to, for he may then be introduced to the work of great writers, not laboriously, but as a pleasure shared by the older person. That is an opportunity too many people miss, the chance to share the story, to experience that complete immersion in the subject which children can teach them. Books, the first books heard or read, are not about life; they *are* life. ✕

To say that books are life to the imaginative child is to admit a tremendous responsibility. It is to require of oneself the furnishing of a varied library. Books must not all be serious, for children love nonsense. They should know Mother Goose and Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll; not the experiences of Alice alone, but the *Hunting of the Snark*, lest they miss acquaintance with the beaver who kept looking the opposite way. *The Rose and the Ring* by Thackeray should not be forgotten, nor much of W. S. Gilbert. Speaking of nonsense, do you know how delightful Walter de la Mare can be, in this field? Here is a poem from *Peacock Pie* called



## ALAS, ALACK!

Ann, Ann!

Come! quick as you can!

There's a fish that *talks*

In the frying-pan.

Out of the fat

As clear as glass

He put up his mouth

And moaned 'Alas'

Oh, most mournful,

'Alas, alack!'

Then turned to his sizzling,

And sank him back.

If there were time I should tell you about poor Jim Jay who "got stuck fast in Yesterday."

→ ~~X~~ Books must mean ~~too~~ the kind of wonderland Alice could have known without going down the rabbit-hole or through the looking-glass. They must mean the wonderland of adventure, of romance. Children should hear the Arthurian stories, from Howard Pyle perhaps, or re-told by Janet Clark in an English edition, but best of all from Sir Thomas Malory himself, in an edition published by the Macmillan Company, *The Romance of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table* abridged from Malory's 15th century prose by A. W. Pollard. This book has the advantage of exquisite pictures by the English illustrator Arthur Rackham. You might be surprised to know how children enjoy the very diction of Malory, how soon they learn the terms used in the stories, whether concerning details of armor or graphic

description of knights who smite their enemies from off the backs of horses. "Then Sir Ector de Maris smote Sir Gareth so hard that down he fell off his horse. And the noble King Arthur encountered with Sir Dinadan and he smote him quite from his saddle," and so on. "Buffet" is a favorite word with children, whether the blow be given or received. On the other hand, they like the ever-delightful theme of disguise which is woven into these stories. Who can understand like the children, who love to "dress up", that moment when "Sir Tristram changed his horse and disguised himself all in red, horse and harness"? Or the account of Sir Launcelot's exploits after he had dressed himself in Sir Kay's armor—"though it was much too small for him"—Sir Launcelot who rode away to see what would happen while he pretended to be Sir Kay! Another element in these tales which is very natural to child-readers or listeners, is the element of the incongruous. They hear with no surprise that "the queen ran into the wood". They expect the unexpected. And having such close sympathy with animals, they love Sir Launcelot and the other knights because they looked well to their horses and usually let them drink first from the forest streams. In the 14th century romance of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a tale I have known children to enjoy, they remember Sir Gawain's horse by name, and hear with relief that Gringalet "had been well cared for and tended in every wise". This is an Arthurian story too, and who wrote it, nobody knows.

→ It is quite simple and natural to turn from romantic prose to poetry concerning this material, whether you

read the children some Tennyson or William Morris,  
or let them listen to later narrative and lyric, even to  
de la Mare again, singing so simply

Launcelot loved Guinevere  
Ages and ages ago.  
Beautiful as a bird was she,  
Preening its wings in a cypress tree;  
Happy in sadness, she and he,  
They loved each other so.

If you believe that fairy tales are bad for children,  
you may not agree with me about these romances,  
still less about the ancient enchantments of Greece—  
(and the Greek gods are so human after all, so im-  
pulsive, so reassuring!) or the folk tales of many  
other countries. There is the fairy element in most  
of them. ~~Children do like tales that belong to the~~  
infancy of races and librarians will tell you how  
earnestly they read Irish and Scotch and Welsh fairy  
tales, stories about Beowulf or Odysseus, other stories  
which come from Japan or from Russia. I think  
there is this same source of enjoyment in many of the  
Bible stories which children enjoy, about David, or  
about Solomon amid splendors almost inconceivable.  
Inconceivable is a grown-up word. ~~A child can con-~~✓  
ceive them with the utmost ease. ~~There are various~~  
~~stories about Solomon and one of them in a book of~~  
Jewish Fairy Tales tells how a bumble-bee stung King  
Solomon on the nose, while he was waiting for the  
Queen of Sheba! I want to tell you, on the chance  
that you have not seen it, of a collection of Fairy and  
Folk Tales made by the Irish poet, William Butler

✓ Yeats, who has explained terms without making them unattractive, and who includes poems with the prose tales. This book quite fascinates children. *Irish Fairy Tales*, a collection of myths by another Irish poet, James Stephens, known as the author of *The Rocky Road to Dublin* and the *Crock of Gold*, has just been published by the Macmillan Company. The fairy tales for children so abound that it is hardly necessary to speak of them in detail, tales of all colors and types. Have them know Hans Christian Andersen, oh, by all means! Even at the expense of the Brothers Grimm! And surely it will do them no harm to listen to a man like Andrew Lang, "dear Andrew with the brindled hair"? His name reminds me of something quite separate from the fairy books, in one sense at least. Do you know his translation with W. Leaf and E. Myers, of the *Iliad*? ~~Do you know his *Odyssey* done with S. H. Butcher?~~ These translations are in prose. ✓ Children understand and love them. And I think it is better to read them, not too much at a time, without especial comment unless questions are asked. Reading must not be too much like lessons. It spoils the game somehow to stop for instruction. ~~Unconsciously~~ a child will learn to form judgments and to distinguish good from bad. I know a man who has read much to his children and with genuine success, for they know and love the best things. And he makes it a rule never to stop to explain words unless challenged; ~~then, of course, he explains the word as carefully as possible.~~ Another rule is, never to point a moral. Children think that tellers of tales are in sympathy with them; they are able to deduce

the moral, but dislike to talk about it. I think grown-ups feel the same way.

Books may combine imagination and instruction in varying proportions attractively, irresistibly even. Such a book is Selma Lagerlöf's *Adventures of Nils*, delighting little people equally with much talk of wild geese, great cranes and storks, big black crows, and with descriptions of vast expanses of country, with geography in fact. Another is that extraordinary book by Henri Fabre, *Social Life in the Insect World*, where they find beetles and wasps and bees and ants having adventures. Johanna Spyri's story of *Heidi* will help them visualize the Alps and *Hans Brinker* by Mary M. Dodge will teach them Holland. They do not appear to object to the tendency of Mr. Robinson of the *Swiss Family Robinson* to moralize. They smile indulgently over his preaching. What they learn from this much-loved book I don't dare guess. Maybe they learn to observe or to be industrious. Maybe they have an illusion that they learn something. I have been jealous of the bland Robinson because he could preach and explain all he liked, for pages, with no protest forthcoming, while I ——— ! I can understand why they like the other Robinson, Robinson Crusoe. How they build things with him. When in doubt what to read to children, read about somebody making something, the Swiss Family's House in the big Tree or Crusoe's many inventions or Odysseus busy with his boat!

They like Kipling, the *Just-So Stories*, the marvellous Jungle Books; and from *Kim* they learn much about India, and from *Puck of Pook's Hill* much about

the history of old England. These are more talked of in our day than Hawthorne's *Grandfather's Chair*, which should not be forgotten, and is the more likely to be because of the emphasis on Hawthorne's own *Tanglewood Tales* and *Wonder Book*. I think too that there is much to learn from Mark Twain in *The Prince and the Pauper* and in *The Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Do you miss Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn? But surely small readers will find them. Don't they know invariably about Tom whitewashing the fence? And the cave? And the raft? I am pleading perhaps for the books not as well known, though they are by well-known authors, by the very authors of the well-known! Boys who know *Treasure Island* almost by heart are often unacquainted with *Kidnapped* and other tales by R. L. S. All of these books are now published in illustrated editions. I have been asked whether I should recommend books with pictures. Yes, if the pictures are good. I have found that children are stimulated by them and that in cases where very imaginative children study them, they have the courage to differ from the artist when they consider that he has failed to give the idea. It is very amusing to hear these criticisms and another way to get into a child's mind.

That is what we want the books to do and what we want to do ourselves surely. In Algernon Blackwood's book (is it for children or grown-ups?) *The Education of Uncle Paul*, where Uncle Paul is gradually learning to re-enter the child-world and be as a little child again for the utter joy and wonder of it, there

comes a great moment, the moment when he is accepted by the children, when small Jonah says to him "We never thought you were as important as you pretended, and your being so big made no difference." Uncle Paul found that for the first time in his life he could play with others instead of alone by himself. The children had taught him. All they expected of him was that he have adventures. And these had to be reported and shared. But he never tried to reduce experience to the "little hard pellet of an exact fact"; not for the children. For that, he felt, would be to lose it. "Exact knowledge, he knew, was often merely a great treachery, and fact, a dangerous weapon that deceived and might even destroy its owner."

It isn't that fact may never be used in great imaginative books, in such a book as Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies* for example, "A fairy tale for a Land-baby." "There are land-babies" he remarks, "then why not water-babies?" This book begins quite simply. "Once upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep and his name was Tom." During the development of Tom's adventures, there is much talk of animals, of the English country-side. Names are given of water-creatures which it is exciting to wonder about; there is suggestive description of river or sea; there is in one way or another suggestive use of words, so that children's vocabularies are enriched, they expand under the influence of such story-telling. They do not miss the lessons of kindness and good faith and they know quite well what Kingsley means when he says in the very last sentence, "But remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a fairy-tale, and

only fun and pretense; and therefore you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true."

Another book which children will listen to or read for themselves over and over again is George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*. I think they love the sheer power of imagination in this book, the intensity of it, the personification, the mystery, the beauty of descriptive passages, the poetic quality in these. It is interesting to observe different children, their individual reaction to such an extended imaginative history. They are divided into two distinct classes: the children who concentrate attention upon the great North Wind and the others who are thinking all the time of the little boy. In some books there is too much mystery, too much suspense, for all but the most unusual children, those who are absolutely fearless about imagining. I think Walter de la Mare had written such a book in *The Three Mullah-Mulgars*. There is something vital and beautiful about it; it is finely written, and so full of stimulation for the kind of child who can follow it at all, unafraid, that it would seem a great pity for such a child to miss the story. The Mullah-Mulgars were monkeys of a royal line. They travel through a country which combines jungle and snowy wastes and they experience strange things, too strange for the more timid child. I understand that some publisher is having made a map of Fairyland. No doubt this country of de la Mare's will be indicated thereon and surely we shall be able to learn from it something more about Peter Pan and the Never-Never Land? It would not be possible to leave J. M. Barrie out of



the list of exquisitely sensitive and creative writers for children. Kensington Gardens interpreted by Barrie in *The Little White Bird* for example. I shall look on the fairyland map for that separate country.

Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* is another beautiful book of exceptional appeal with fascinating animals who do things as people do, with a big river flowing through its pages, with a revealing chapter about the great god Pan, who is not dead as the poet feared, not by any means. Grahame is well-known as the author of *Dream Days* and the *Golden Age*. These books are too subtle for very young children and yet I think there is a pleasure in hearing them read aloud which even the little ones share. I believe they enjoy things which they cannot wholly understand. They are not literal about their demands. I heard a young listener confess "I did not know what it was all about, only a little here and there, but I liked your voice running along."

The same thing might be said of these books that is said of a most alluring book by W. H. Hudson, called *A Little Boy Lost*. The book-list explains that Hudson's *Little Boy Lost* will be enjoyed by the unusual child and the adult of literary taste who reads it aloud to the children. The unusual child however is not the grown-up in miniature, but a small person exhibiting the traits found in all children, the difference being that these are heightened, emphasized, in the exceptional child. I am sure most children could enjoy the experiences of the little boy W. H. Hudson is writing about, his wanderings over plains

and among mountains of South America mingling with animals and strange people. One of the important things about this book is the distinguished style in which it is written. It is worth trying with any child-audience.

Another book of extraordinary quality is Padraic Colum's *The King of Ireland's Son*, fantastic and surprising, full of lovely phrases, full of delicate humor. Colum, by the way, has a recent book relating to a subject I have already mentioned, *The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy*. He has also written for children a book of myths called *The Children of Odin* based on the ancient northern sagas and these books are finely illustrated.

— | \* Whether a book of folk-tales or legends or a book highly imaginative and improbable or a book founded on fact, reality, ~~like those marvellous books of LaBrie about insects,~~ I believe that you may consider each one in the romantic light of adventure, if you will be patient, if you will experiment with children and above all, if you will not hurry them. ~~I~~ I tried four times to interest my own children in Chaucer's stories, particularly in the *Canterbury Tales*. The fifth time, after a considerable interval, I succeeded. They were not ready when I expected them to be. I had to wait. One never knows. I should have thought them not ready for *Don Quixote*, even as the story is re-told for children, nor for some of the Shakespeare plays, not re-told by Lamb, but in the original. Yet they surprised me again. They liked them and claimed them right away.

I have been taking it for granted that many of these

books will be read aloud to children. I believe it is very important to read to them, but the children will read for themselves if the books are there. It is better not to depend on libraries, generous and resourceful as libraries certainly are, librarians, I should say! There is really a pleasure in owning books, however, and it is tempting to have them about. I have known children to be reading three books at a time carrying on happy experience through Mrs. Burnett's *Secret Garden*, and reading history and Greek Stories too. A small friend of mine who has twice read Mrs. Ethel Cook Eliot's *The Little House in the Fairy Wood* began it the third time and said that she was pretending herself into the story and was going to take Orpheus with her to make music in the wood for Ivra and the fairies. I hope that Mrs. Eliot will not object to having Orpheus get into her book.

This is the child who wanted to know a long time ago who 'Or-fer-us' was and after hearing the story about him she said "Well, if I could play a harp like that, so well that I saw tigers and wolves and lions sitting down to listen, I'd drop the harp and run. When he stopped playing, how did he get away?"

Will you let Orpheus and his music suggest a music of words? Will you let me add a plea for poetry? Poetry is for children, quite literally. In a sense, poetry is merely the capacity for wonder. We who are grown, love poetry in proportion to the vitality and the curiosity which we have kept out of our childhood. The half-understanding of poems read, is often a source of the pleasure children have in

✓ reading. Words, sounds, may be full of witchery, full of music, without being wholly understood. And children need not have experienced things in order to feel them and respond emotionally. It is child-like poets who rescue the art from the world of sophistication. ~~Nothing is trivial or commonplace to such poets.~~ I want more poetry read to children, but it is a good thing to have them try to read it themselves. ✓ Not grown-up verse about children! ✗ That can hardly be expected to interest them. They have more alluring things to occupy them. Much verse described as verse for children is merely verse and nothing more; some of it is doggerel. ✗ There is no magic in it. But there are poems to be found, poems of all periods, which will hold them and which they will remember. ✓ I think obituary poems about dead birds, kittens, puppies or even dolls, certainly such poems concerning people may safely be omitted from our list, for very young children at any rate. Writers of verse seem to have expected them to read of death with surprising frequency. I think blank verse can hardly be appreciated by children until they are fourteen or fifteen years old, though there again I am uncertain, having found children younger than that enthusiastic over parts of Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. How can one generalize, when a child under ten chooses Shelley's *Sky Lark* or *Ode to the West Wind* to read aloud, and chooses them as favorites? ✓ Whatever poetry is chosen, let there be magic in it, magic of line, of sound, some beauty, some strangeness. ✗ ~~I have been asked what poets writing today~~

would be most enjoyed by children. The name of one I have already mentioned, Walter de la Mare, Robert Graves, author of *Fairies and Fusiliers* and *Country Sentiment*, is another. William H. Davies is another. I should like to give you one very short poem by each of these. From de la Mare I am choosing *Old Shellover*, another piece of *Peacock Pie*. I think *Old Shellover* may be a Snail.

‘Come!’ said Old Shellover.  
‘What?’ says Creep.  
‘The horny old Gardener’s fast asleep;  
The fat cock thrush  
To his nest has gone,  
And the dew shines bright  
In the rising Moon;  
Old Salle Worm from her hole doth peep;  
‘Come!’ said Old Shellover.  
‘Ay!’ said Creep.

From William H. Davies I am taking a poem published only a fortnight ago, called

### THE OX

Why should I pause, poor beast, to praise  
Thy back so red, thy sides so white,  
And on thy brow those curls in which  
Thy mournful eyes take no delight?

For if I call thee some pet name  
And give thee of my care today,  
Where wilt thou be tomorrow morn  
When I turn curious eyes thy way?

Nay, I'll not miss what I'll not find;  
And I'll find no fond cares for thee;  
So take away those great sad eyes  
That stare across the fence at me.

And from Robert Graves I have chosen the song

**I'D LOVE TO BE A FAIRY'S CHILD!**

Children born of fairy stock  
Never need for shirt or frock,  
Never want for food or fire,  
Always get their heart's desire:  
Jingle pockets full of gold:  
Marry when they're seven years old.  
Every fairy child may keep  
Two strong ponies and ten sheep:  
All have houses, each his own,  
Built of brick or granite stone;  
They live on cherries, they run wild—  
I'd love to be a fairy's child!

# BOOKS OF IMAGINATIVE QUALITY

Mentioned by Mrs. Conkling

*Nearly All These Books Are Published in Several Different Editions*

WILLIAM BLAKE	Songs of Innocence.
ROBERT BURNS	Poems.
MERRY ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD.	
JAMES BALDWIN	Story of Siegfried.
MOTHER GOOSE.	
EDWARD LEAR	Book of Nonsense.
LEWIS CARROLL	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.
" "	Through the Looking Glass.
" "	Hunting of the Snark.
THACKERAY	The Rose and the Ring.
W. S. GILBERT	Bab Ballads.
WALTER DE LA MARE	Peacock Pie.
" "	Songs of Childhood.
" "	Three Mullah-Mulgars.
HOWARD PYLE	King Arthur and his Knights.
SIR THOMAS MALORY	The Romance of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, a- bridged from Malory's 15th Century Prose, by A. W. Pollard, ill. by Rackham.
TENNYSON	Poems.
WM. MORRIS	Poems.
FOLK TALES OF ALL COUNTRIES.	
SCUDDER	Book of Fables and Folk Stories.
CARRICK	Picture Tales from the Russians.
THE BIBLE.	
JEWISH FAIRY TALES.	
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS	Fairy and Folk Tales.
ANDERSEN	Fairy Tales
ANDREW LANG	Fairy Books.
HOMER	Iliad, trans. by Lang, Leaf & Myers.
HOMER	Odyssey, trans. by Butcher & Lang.

SELMA LAGERLÖF	Adventures of Nils.
“ “	Further Adventures of Nils.
HENRI FABRE	Social Life in the Insect World.
“ “	Insect Adventures.
JOANNA SPYRI	Heidi, etc.
MARY MAPES DODGE	Hans Brinker
WYSS	Swiss Family Robinson.
DANIEL DEFÖE	Robinson Crusoe.
RUDYARD KIPLING	Just So Stories.
“ “	Jungle Books.
“ “	Kim.
“ “	Puck of Pook's Hill.
HAWTHORNE	Grandfather's Chair.
“	Wonder Books.
“	Tanglewood Tales
MARK TWAIN	Prince and the Pauper.
“ “	Yankees in King Arthur's Court.
“ “	Adventures of Tom Sawyer.
“ “	Huckleberry Finn.
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON	Treasure Island.
“ “ “	Kidnapped, etc.
ALGERNON BLACKWOOD	Education of Uncle Paul.
CHARLES KINGSLEY	Water Babies.
GEORGE MACDONALD	At the Back of the North Wind.
SIR JAMES BARRIE	Peter and Wendy.
“ “ “	Little White Bird.
KENNETH GRAHAME	Wind in the Willows.
“ “	Dream Days
“ “	Golden Age.
W. H. HUDSON	A Little Boy Lost.
PADRAIC COLUM	The King of Ireland's Son.
“ “	Adventures of Odysseus and the
“ “	Tale of Troy, ill. Pogany.
“ “	The Children of Odin. ill. by Pogany.
CHAUCER	Canterbury Tales. (Modern Readers'
	Chaucer, ed. by Tatlock and Mac-
	Kaye).
CERVANTES	Don Quixote.



# NEW COLLECTION

SHAKESPEARE	Tempest, Midsummer Night's Dream Twelfth Night.
FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT	Secret Garden.
ETHEL COOK ELIOT	Little House in the Fairy Wood.
SHELLEY	The Skylark. (In Poems).
"	Ode to the West Wind. (In Poems).
ROBERT GRAVES	Fairies and Fusiliers.
WM. H. DAVIES	Poems.
JOHN G. NEIHARDT	The Splendid Wayfaring.
JAMES STEPHENS	Irish Fairy Tales, ill. by Rackham.
JOHN MASEFIELD	Book of Discoveries, ill. by Rackham.
LEO MILLER	The Hidden People.
AN ANCIENT MAPPE OF FAIRYLAND newly discovered and set forth by Bernard Sleigh.	



## \*Odysseus or Peter Rabbit for Your Children?

By

Grace Hazard Conkling

Children live in a world all their own, and from this world they look out at grown-ups, wondering about them. The world of grown-ups is their despair; but it is not because they are not serious. I think it is Bret Harte who says that "the dominant expression of a child is gravity." They have endless adjustments to make and investigations to carry on. Things change like chameleons before their very eyes. Instead of patronizing them, instead of regarding their make-believe with patient indulgence, we should be trying to get back into their world again, we should be trying to hear their thoughts. One of the ways to find out what they think about, to fathom the grave wonder in their eyes, is to tell them stories and to get their comments afterward. Another way is to share with them the stories told by others, whether in prose or verse; I mean, to read them books.

But when it comes to choosing books for children, people often make the mistake of underestimating their mentality. Delightful as *Peter Rabbit* undoubtedly is to them, there are other friends for little people. Do you know that they can enjoy the wanderings of *Odysseus* as well as the adventures of the rabbit? They will listen with quiet sympathy to long passages from *Homer*, understanding his wealth of detail, for they like their stories told that way. For the more fanciful, the description of *Mercury* crossing

the sky; for the more matter-of-fact, the story of Odysseus at his boat-building; Homer knows how to talk to children.

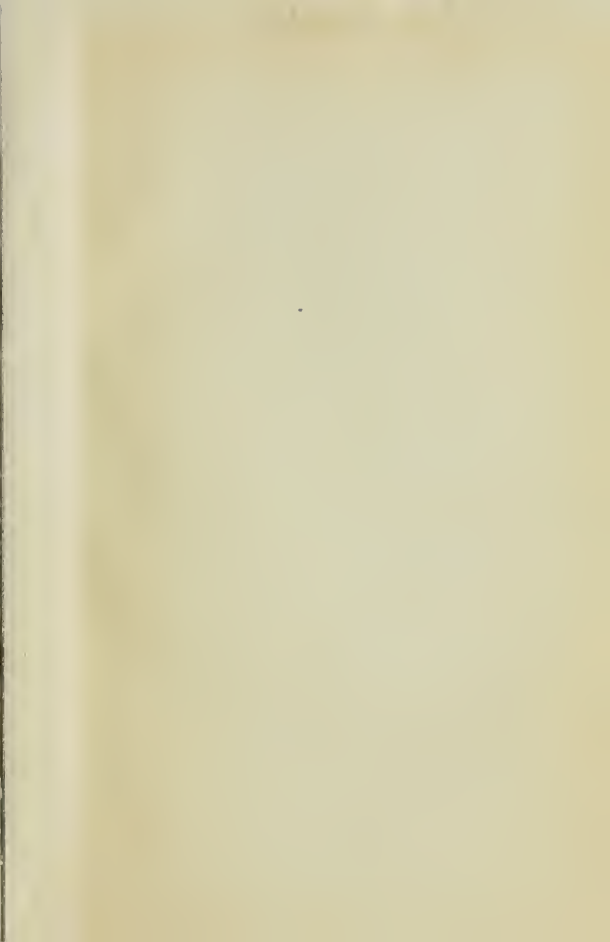
Or there is Hawthorne's Wonder Book to tell them the old tales. No child should be denied the joy of these nor of many of Chaucer's stories nor of Shakespeare's. The longer one thinks of it, the more selfish it seems on the part of us grown-ups to withhold from children any beauty they can appreciate.

Not that we should tell them to appreciate! They do not need to be told. They have more sensitiveness than we and they will respond quickly enough if given opportunity. Books should be where children can find them; many books, good books we want them to know, but which must appear to happen into the world of their imagination, quite unannounced. Such happy accidents are never forgotten. I know a little boy who speaks of the day he *met* the man who wrote "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." He will remember that man.

More books, the best books of all time, and freedom of choice once the books are there! Then will come the delight of hearing children tell about their discoveries, and that other joy of discovering the children. For their imagination carries them far beyond experience, their emotions are not bounded by it. As they love words or sounds not wholly understood, so their dreams outstrip understanding. They can interpret literature for us. They expect literature.

*\*A Newspaper Clipping which appeared during Children's Book Week.*





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